

BOOK
VIII.

1880.

he came to the front, and though an under-secretary made the official reply, it was the prime minister who wound up. One night he made no fewer than six speeches, touching all the questions raised in a miscellaneous night's sitting.

In the middle of the summer Mr. Gladstone fell ill. Consternation reigned in London. It even exceeded the dismay caused by the defeat at Maiwand. A friend went to see him as he lay in bed. 'He talked most of the time, not on politics, but on Shakespeare's Henry VIII., and the decay of theological study at Oxford. He never intended his reform measure to produce this result.' After his recovery, he went for a cruise in the *Grantully Castle*, not returning to parliament until September 4, three days before the session ended, when he spoke with all his force on the eastern question.

III

In the electoral campaign Mr. Gladstone had used expressions about Austria that gave some offence at Vienna. On coming into power he volunteered an assurance to the Austrian ambassador that he would willingly withdraw his language if he understood that he had misapprehended the circumstances. The ambassador said that Austria meant strictly to observe the treaty of Berlin. Mr. Gladstone then expressed his regret for the words 'of a painful and wounding character' that had fallen from him. At the time, he explained, he was 'in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility.'

At the close of the session of 1880, ministers went to work upon the unfulfilled portions of the Berlin treaty relating to Greece and Montenegro. Those stipulations were positive in the case of Montenegro; as to Greece they were less definite, but they absolutely implied a cession of more or less territory by Turkey. They formed the basis of Lord Salisbury's correspondence, but his arguments and representations were without effect.

Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues went further. They proposed and obtained a demonstration off the Albanian coast on behalf of Montenegro. Each great Power sent a man-of-war, but the concert of Europe instantly became what